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LETTER DATED 28 JULY 1999 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On 26 July 1999, I informed you of my decision to continue with the registration of voters for the forthcoming consultation in East Timor (see S/1999/822). Following discussions yesterday with my Personal Representative for East Timor, Mr. Jamsheed Marker, and advice received from the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), I wish to inform you that I have decided to postpone the date of the consultation itself until 30 August 1999. This decision has been relayed to the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal.

I took this decision for technical reasons, and also as a consequence of the delay in the start of registration that occurred in mid-July, which was necessary at that time in order to seek an improvement in the security situation. It is fundamental to the integrity of the consultation process that there be a reliable list of voters. I have been advised that UNAMET requires more time in which to collate the list of voters, publicize it adequately and allow for a proper appeals procedure.

The Council will note that the new date for the consultation is now over three weeks later than the date of 8 August 1999 originally envisaged in resolution 1246 (1999) by which UNAMET was established. I would therefore like to request the Council to authorize an extension of the current UNAMET mandate by one month to enable the Mission to perform the tasks assigned to it.

As foreseen in the agreement of 5 May 1999 (A/53/951-S/1999/513), the United Nations will continue to have a presence in East Timor after the consultation. The United Nations is currently planning for this phase and is discussing this with the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal. This was the main focus of attention at the Senior Officials Meeting held on 15 and 16 July 1999. I intend to report to the Council shortly on this matter.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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